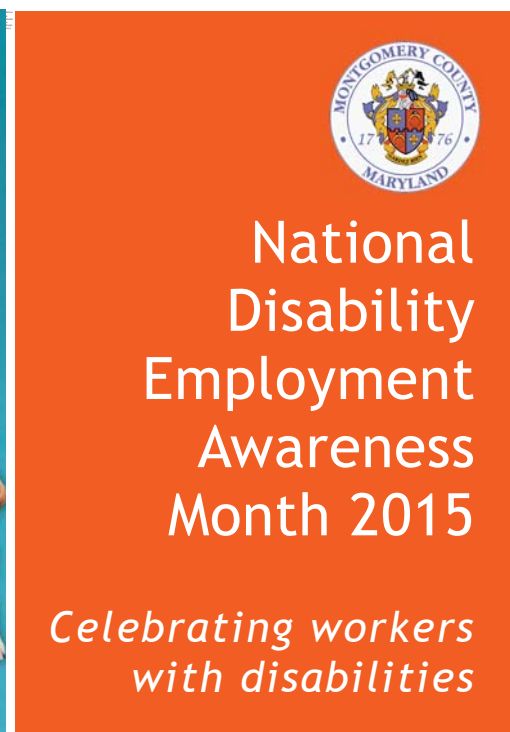




ABOVE: THIS YEAR'S NDEAM POSTER AND THEME



ISSUE 1: OCTOBER 9, 2015

October Marks 70th Anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month

"Montgomery County is committed to serving as a model to local jurisdictions by providing job training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities," said County Executive Isiah Leggett. "Providing employment opportunities is good for the individual, the employer, and for the communities in which they live."

Montgomery County Government is proud to participate in the National Disability Employment Awareness Month, held each year in October. This year's theme, "My Disability Is One Part of Who I Am," reminds us that America's workers with disabilities make significant workforce contributions in local communities where they live and work.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month began in 1945 when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week of October to be the "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to recognize the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

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Working Together to Provide Workforce Opportunities

Montgomery County Government is dedicated to providing training and employment services to people with disabilities. Coordinated efforts by the following organizations and groups have resulted in a number of programs that serve people with disabilities, including disabled veterans:

- Office of the County Executive
- County Council
- Office of Human Resources
- Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
- Commission on Veterans Affairs
- Montgomery County Department Directors

Major accomplishments include the Non-Competitive Hiring Process for People with Severe Disabilities, the Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Program, and Project SEARCH Montgomery.

Non-Competitive Hiring Process for People with Severe Disabilities

On November 6, 2012, Montgomery County voters approved an amendment to the County Charter that enables the County to operate a program within the merit system to recruit and select qualified individuals with severe physical and mental disabilities on a non-competitive basis. This initiative allows a qualified person with severe disabilities to be hired non-competitively for a vacant merit position.

To be eligible, individuals must have a severe developmental, physical or psychiatric disability, as well as be certified by the Maryland Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services (or equivalent out-of-state vocational rehabilitation agency), meet the minimum qualifications for the position, be able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation, pass a background check (if required) and meet the appropriate medical qualifications for the position.

Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Project

An example of a successful County program serving individuals with significant disabilities is the Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Project (MCPIP). Created in 2007, MCPIP provides flexible employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities to fulfill the work requirements of County departments. Department representatives work with a customized employment career specialist to identify and create part-time positions based on a department's workforce needs.

MCPIP participants serve as paid interns in department positions based on their individual job interests, skills and competencies. MCPIP interns gain valuable work experience by developing on-the-job skills to help them compete for County merit positions or opportunities in other organizations.

Fun fact: Successful employment results!

As of October 2015, 31 participants of the Customized Employment Public Intern Program and Project SEARCH Montgomery obtained gainful employment with Montgomery County departments or in other organizations.

Project SEARCH Montgomery

Another County initiative designed to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities is Project SEARCH Montgomery.

Launched by County Executive Isiah Leggett in 2012, the program consists of three 10-week work and study job training assignments that help participants learn skills that will aid them in obtaining gainful employment. Interns are supported by a business-based support team of SEEC* job coaches, a full-time Ivy Mount School instructor, and intern worksite supervisors. Interns gain practical work experience in a variety of County department job training settings and partner agencies, including:

- The City of Gaithersburg
- The City of Rockville
- Montgomery College
- Montgomery Parks

*Seeking Equality Empowerment and Community for People with Developmental Disabilities (SEEC)

At right (from left to right): Former Council Member Phil Andrews, Council Members Craig Rice and Sidney Katz, 2015 Project SEARCH Graduate Steven Seo and County Executive Isiah Leggett



Above: Graduates of the 2015 Project SEARCH class with County Executive Isiah Leggett



Above: 2015 Project SEARCH Montgomery Graduation Class with County Executive Isiah Leggett and Office of Human Resources Director Shawn Stokes



Meet the Providers of County Services to People with Disabilities



Karen Hochberg

Employed with Montgomery County Government since 2000, Karen Hochberg has worked as the County's Disability Program Manager, a Human Resources Specialist and, currently, as the County's Targeted Recruitment Specialist in the Office of Human Resources. In her present role, Karen coordinates the hiring preference process for people with disabilities, veterans and veterans with disabilities, and handles the noncompetitive hiring process for people with severe disabilities. She also serves as a partner to the Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Project (MCPIP) and acts as the business liaison for Project SEARCH, expanding the program to include the City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville and Montgomery College.

Karen is proud to be part of the County's commitment in developing work opportunities for individuals with disabilities and facilitating the cultural change that inclusion brings to the workplace.



Marie Parker

Marie Parker serves as TransCen's Program Manager and County Liaison for the Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Project (MCPIP), in partnership with the American Job Center and Montgomery County Government. As the County's MCPIP Liaison, Marie identifies and creates part-time positions in County government offices based on specific department needs. She recruits qualified individuals with significant disabilities for County positions based on interns' interests, skills and competencies, ensuring that necessary supports are in place.

Additionally, she oversees the efforts of the local Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Youth with Disabilities Initiative. Through this initiative, she provides the framework and supervision for participants to transition into employment opportunities based on their interests, skills and abilities.

In Upcoming Issues...

This newsletter is a special weekly publication for the month of October 2015. In future issues, look for program participant spotlights, fun facts, photos and more as we continue to celebrate the 70th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month!

For more information:

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ABOVE: POSTER IMAGE FROM WWW.WHATCANYOUDOCAMPAIGN.ORG



National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2015

Celebrating workers with disabilities

ISSUE 2: OCTOBER 16, 2015

Spotlighting a Special Partnership: Department of Housing and Community Affairs and Project SEARCH Montgomery

Since the program's launch, 32 Project SEARCH interns have graduated from the program and 21 graduates have obtained employment in Montgomery County Government Departments and partnering agencies.

Project SEARCH Montgomery, launched by County Executive Isiah Leggett in 2012, offers a 30-week job-training program for unpaid interns. The program is made possible by a public / non-profit partnership with the national Project SEARCH program, Ivy Mount School and SEEC.* The unique on-the-job training program provides support to interns who work in County departments, such as the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA).

Interns are supported by a full-time, business-based support team of two SEEC job coaches and a full-time on-site Ivy Mount School instructor. The on-site team provides daily support and guidance for the interns and work supervisors to ensure interns progress in County department and partnering agency work locations. Partnering agencies include the City of Gaithersburg, the City Rockville, Montgomery College and Montgomery Parks.

Join the partnership!

There are many ways to get involved with Project SEARCH Montgomery. For details, please contact:

Karen Hochberg:
karen.hochberg@montgomerycountymd.gov

Steve Blanks:
sblanks@seeconline.org

Lu Merrick:
lmerrick@ivy Mount.org

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*Seeking Equality Empowerment and Community for People with Developmental Disabilities (SEEC)

Special Thanks

Many organizations and County departments provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to help them develop their work skills and abilities. Representatives provide their time and experience to train, mentor and supervise Project SEARCH Montgomery interns in order to help them succeed and achieve their workforce goals. Their commitment gives meaning to the National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2015 themes of:

- My disability is one part of who I am.
- At work, it's what people *can* do that matters.

A sincere message of appreciation to the individuals who work at:

- Montgomery County Government Departments:
 - Board of Elections
 - Community Use of Public Facilities
 - Environmental Protection
 - Fire and Rescue Service
 - General Services
 - Health and Human Services
 - Housing and Community Affairs
 - Human Resources
 - Management and Budget
 - Office of the County Attorney
 - Office of the State's Attorney
 - Permitting Services
 - Police
 - Public Libraries
 - Recreation
 - Sheriff's Office
 - Technology Services
 - Transportation
- Ivymount School
- Seeking Equality Empowerment and Community for People with Developmental Disabilities (SEEC)
- City of Gaithersburg
- City of Rockville
- Montgomery College
- Montgomery Parks

Clarence J. Snuggs

Director, Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs

Clarence Snuggs serves as Director for Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA). Under his leadership, the department works to prevent and correct the problems that contribute to the physical decline of residential and commercial areas, and to increase the supply of affordable housing for County residents.

Sharing the "can-do" spirit!

Below: Clarence Snuggs, James Travers



"I started working with Project SEARCH and James Travers nine months ago when I assumed the role of Department Director," said Clarence. "This is when I learned about the County's commitment to provide on-the-job training opportunities to help persons with disabilities, and the innovative collaboration made possible by Project SEARCH Montgomery. This is where I met James."

Clarence and the DHCA staff who work with James admire his "can-do" spirit he displays when performing his work assignments. Staff describe James as being committed to doing quality work and helping his co-workers achieve the department's mission.

According to Clarence, "The Project SEARCH job training program offers an effective skills training program that prepares student interns to enter the workforce. By providing job coaches and department mentors, interns recognize and use their abilities to move forward on a career path."

James Travers

Project SEARCH Montgomery Graduate

When James Travers was asked to describe his work at the Department of Housing and Community Affairs

(DHCA), he happily said, "At the office I work with the four sections—

Affordable Housing, Multifamily Housing, Landlord-Tenant Affairs, and Licensing and Registration. I help with a variety of work tasks. For example, I do scanning of department records, file and organize records for the department, and also do data entry. I work

on special projects like the information needed to respond to questions submitted through the MC311 customer service requests."

The Project SEARCH program prepared him for his graduation from the work-study program and his transition to work in DHCA. Speaking of his opportunity to work at DHCA, James said, "When I became a County employee, there was an increase in my work hours. Also, I like working with department staff. I like it, because there are people I can talk with when I have a question or need to figure out how to do something." To summarize how he feels now that he is a County employee, he said, "My goal is to do a good job each time."

James is an outstanding example of someone who has benefited from the innovative collaboration of DHCA and Project SEARCH, a special partnership that works to provide on-the-job training, mentoring and employment opportunities for Montgomery County residents.

The "Can-Do" Team



At left: Jay Greene, James Travers, Nancy Eaby, Clarence Snuggs

At right: Clarence Snuggs, James Travers, Jay Greene



Project SEARCH 2015 Graduation



Above left: County Executive Isiah Leggett and Office of Human Resources Director Shawn Stokes presenting diplomas

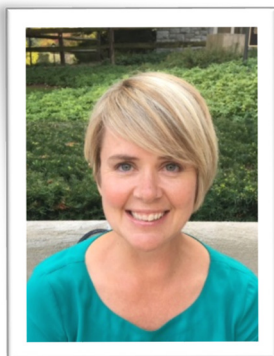
Above right: Members of the 2015 graduating class

Below left: 2015 Project SEARCH Graduates with David Dise, Director, Department of General Services

Below right: Project SEARCH staff and graduate celebration



Meet the Providers of Opportunities for People with Disabilities



Nancy Eaby

For the past three years, Nancy Eaby has worked as the New Hire/Intern Program Team Leader for SEEC*/Project SEARCH Montgomery. The program is dedicated to providing education and training for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through an innovative workforce and career development model that benefits the individual, the workplace and the community.

As part of James Travers' job training program at Project SEARCH, Nancy worked with James during his 10-week internship at the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and served as his job coach to help him transition into his new work setting. James attended training conducted by the Project SEARCH instructor and participated in five hours of daily work immersion at DHCA. Through these experiences, James learned how to be an important contributor to the DHCA workforce.

With over 15 years of experience in the developmental disabilities field, Nancy considers DHCA as an example of how workplace and classroom settings help change the lives of persons with disabilities to help them achieve independence as productive workers and as individuals.



Jalal (Jay) Greene

In 2013, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) was one of the first County departments to partner with Project SEARCH Montgomery. As the DHCA Chief of Housing Division, Jay partnered with Nancy Eaby, Project SEARCH's Team Leader of the New Hire/Intern Program. They conducted a thorough assessment of the essential work requirements across the four sections led by Jay: Affordable Housing, Multifamily Housing, Landlord-Tenant Affairs, and Licensing and Registration. Their effort resulted in a 20-hour Project SEARCH internship that offers a welcoming job training environment for individuals.

In August 2015, the DHCA budget planning efforts allowed a position to transition from a 20-hour part-time term position to a 30-hour part-time permanent position. James Travers was eligible to apply for the DHCA position based on his successful completion of the Project SEARCH Employment Training Program. Project SEARCH graduates are eligible to submit their job application for consideration under the County's non-competitive hiring process. According to Jay, "James has become part of the DHCA family. He participates in department staff meetings, and is a dependable employee."

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For more information:

OHR@Montgomerycountymd.gov

Office of Human Resources
101 Monroe Street, 7th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Fun fact:

Project SEARCH interns are eligible to apply for vacancy announcements that are limited to County employees only.